

Uprising

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The three main characters of *Uprising* are Bella, Jane, and Yetta in the beginning of the 20th century. Bella is an illiterate young woman from Italy who has just arrived in America to financially help the family she left in her homeland. Jane is a lonely affluent young woman, born and raised in New York City; she lives with her father who has little time for his daughter and Miss Wellington, an overbearing governess dictating Jane's every move. Yetta is a passionate Russian immigrant who, with her sister, Rahel, wants to bring the remainder of their family over to the United States. Mr. Blanck, owner of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, uses an almost slave driving technique when managing his employees. Signor and Signora Carlotti are Bella's greedy and dishonest landlords, always conspiring to cheat Bella out of her hard-earned money.

Bella, the Italian immigrant, would be identified as the protagonist of the novel. Throughout the novel her character must overcome the most adversity of all three girls. Bella is initially meek and solely desires to complete her work while tending to her own affairs; she evolves into an assertive and self-sufficient young woman. Yetta is almost the exact opposite, outspoken and forceful in Russian nature. Jane has the advantage of wealth and privilege, but lacks companionship and pursues a cause to embrace. Mr. Blanck is the antagonist and the bane of the girls' existence throughout the novel, cheating them of their wages and making

them work hours on end. Signor and especially Signora Carlotti, also antagonists, scheme numerous ways to force Bella into working for her room and board.

The novel is set during the early 20th century in New York City, New York a period of immense immigration and expansion of manufacturing. During this era factory owners were not taking into consideration the necessary provisions when building their factories or the basic necessities of their employees. Many immigrants were so happy to be in America they would work for almost nothing and employers took advantage of their earnestness. The book references suffrage parades and the strike of the Triangle employees in 1910. The author also references one of Wilbur Wright's aeronautic adventures and the Vanderbilt's fortune.

Bella arrives in the U.S. and moves into Carlotti's boarding house. The Carlotti's son, Rocco, finds Bella a job at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory and befriends the Russian immigrants, Yetta and Rahel. When Mr. Blanck's ignores the grievances of the employees a strike ensues due to the poor working conditions and unattainable expectations. Jane and her college friends decide to participate in the strike where they meet Bella and Yetta; they become close friends when Jane leaves her family to live with Bella and Yetta. When the union settles short of its ideals, the compromise leads to disaster changing the girls' lives forever.